

We support strongly your "Military Voting Rights Act of 1997" which amends the "Unformed and Overseas Absentee Voting Act". Your bill will make more explicit the right of active duty personnel and their family members to vote in federal, state, and local elections with absentee ballots as the "Soldier's and Sailors' Civil Relief Act of 1940" has historically been interpreted by state election officials.

Any assertion that military personnel, who are serving their country, can lose their right to vote in state and local elections because of their service-connected absences is outrageous! All the brave men and women of the armed forces serving throughout the world are grateful for your prompt, decisive action to preserve their Constitutional right to vote.

Sincerely,

J.C. PENNINGTON,
Major General, U.S. Army (Ret.),
President.

AIR FORCE ASSOCIATION
Arlington, VA, February 5, 1997.

Hon. PHIL GRAMM,
Senate Russell Building,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR GRAMM: The Air Force Association strongly endorses your sponsorship of "The Military Voting Rights Act of 1997." The right of active duty military personnel and their dependents to vote in all federal, state and local elections needs to again be reemphasized to state and local election officials. Recent problems in Texas have again reminded us that the right to vote must be fought for time and time again. Your legislation, once enacted, will help to correct this inequity.

We pledge our support to assist you by seeking additional cosponsors, to inform our members nationwide of your effort and to help in any appropriate way.

Sincerely,

DOYLE E. LARSON.●

By Mrs. MURRAY (for herself,
Mr. DODD, Mr. DASCHLE, Mr.
KENNEDY, Mr. HARKIN, Ms.
MOSELEY-BRAUN, Mr. INOUE,
Mr. LAUTENBERG, Mr. WELL-
STONE, Mr. KERRY, and Mr.
AKAKA):

S. 280. A bill to amend the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 to allow employees to take school involvement leave to participate in the school activities of their children or to participate in literacy training, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Labor and Human Resources.

THE TIME FOR SCHOOLS ACT OF 1997

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, 4 years ago today, thanks to the hard work of Senator DODD, we passed the Family and Medical Leave Act. It was one of the first things I did as a newly elected Senator. And I am proud of its success. In fact, it is probably the single most effective law passed by Congress this decade.

Now I want to expand the scope of FMLA to apply to participation in our schools. The Time for Schools Act of 1997 will allow parents 24 hours per year to participate in activities in their child's school.

As the mother of two children—one a teenager in high school—I know how difficult and how important it is to participate in their education. I have

been lucky to have had the opportunity to be involved in their lives. But many parents do not have the time it takes to do those little things that will assure their child's success in school.

By expanding the uses of one of the most successful laws in years, I want to give parents something they don't have enough of—time.

When I tour schools in my home State of Washington, I often hear young people say, "Adults don't seem to care about me." We know that's not true, but we need to show them that adults do care. And one of the best places to start is to reaffirm the importance of their education by taking steps to help their families get more involved in schools.

These days we have many dual-income families and single parents struggling to work to make ends meet. All of these families know how important it is to be involved in their children's learning.

However, a recent study, Parents as School Partners research initiative, sponsored by the National Council of Jewish Women's Center for the Child, found that a basic lack of time was one of the main barriers to more parental involvement at schools.

Educational studies have shown that family involvement is more important to student success than family income or education. In fact, things parents control, such as limiting excess television watching and providing a variety of reading materials in the home, account for almost all the differences—nearly 90 percent—in average student achievement across States.

All sectors of our communities want more time for young people. Students, teachers, parents and businesses feel something must be done to improve family involvement. In fact, 89 percent of company executives identified the biggest obstacle to school reform as the lack of parental involvement.

And, a 1996 postelection poll commissioned by the national PTA and other organizations found that 86 percent of people favor legislation that would allow workers unpaid leave to attend parent-teacher conferences, or to take other actions to improve learning for their children.

A commitment to our children is a commitment to the future. I want to make sure all young people receive the attention they need to succeed.

My legislation will allow parents time to: First, attend a parent/teacher conference; second, interview a new school for their child; and third, participate in family literacy training.

Just last week, I talked to a woman from Bellevue who has an 11-year-old special needs daughter in school. Both she and her husband work during the day, but he cannot get away for school activities. She told me my legislation would allow her husband to attend school conferences and participate in their child's education for the first time.

I look at the Family and Medical Leave Act—which has helped one in six

American employees take time to deal with serious family health problems, and which 90 percent of businesses had little or no cost implementing—and I see success. People in my State have been able to deal with urgent family needs, without having to give up their jobs.

My bill expands the uses of Family and Medical Leave to another urgent need families face—the need to help their children learn.

Now we need to grant employees the same peace of mind about preventing problems in school that can lead to bigger problems for their children later on. The time is right for the Time for Schools Act.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 70

At the request of Mrs. BOXER, the name of the Senator from Illinois [Ms. MOSELEY-BRAUN] was added as a cosponsor of S. 70, a bill to apply the same quality and safety standards to domestically manufactured handguns that are currently applied to imported handguns.

S. 183

At the request of Mr. DODD, the names of the Senator from Minnesota [Mr. WELLSTONE], the Senator from Hawaii [Mr. AKAKA], and the Senator from Washington [Mrs. MURRAY] were added as cosponsors of S. 183, a bill to amend the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 to apply the Act to a greater percentage of the United States workforce, and for other purposes.

S. 212

At the request of Mr. WELLSTONE, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts [Mr. KERRY] was added as a cosponsor of S. 212, a bill to increase the maximum Federal Pell Grant award in order to allow more American students to afford higher education, and to express the Sense of the Senate.

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 5—RELATIVE TO THE NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY OF 1949

Mr. ROTH (for himself, Mr. LIEBERMAN, Mr. LUGAR, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. HAGEL, Mr. MCCAIN, Mr. COCHRAN, Mr. ENZI, and Ms. MOSELEY-BRAUN) submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. CON. RES. 5

Whereas the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is a community of democracies that continues to play a critical role in addressing the security challenges of the post-Cold War era and in creating an environment of enduring peace and stability in Europe;

Whereas NATO remains the only security alliance with both real defense capabilities and transatlantic membership;

Whereas the North Atlantic Council held a ministerial meeting on December 10, 1996, at NATO Headquarters in Brussels, Belgium, and—